

late stood out against your brother, and hee hath tane you newly into his grace, where it is impossible you should take root, but by the faire weather that you make your selfe, it is needful that you frame the season for your owne harvest.

John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge, then a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all, then to fashion a carriage to rob loue from any: in this (though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man) it must not be denied but I am a plaine dealing villaine. I am trusted with a mufflell, and enfranchisde with a clog, therefore I haue decreed, not to sing in my cage: if I had my mouth, I would bite: if I had my liberty, I would do my liking: in the meane time, let me be that I am, and seeke not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no vse of your discontent?

John. I will make all vse of it, for I vse it onely. Who comes here? what newes *Borachio*?

Enter Borachio.

Bor. I came yonder from a great supper, the Prince your brother is royally entertained by *Leonato*, and I can giue you intelligence of an intended marriage.

John. Will it serue for any Modell to build mischief on? What is hee for a foole that betrothes himselfe to vniquietnesse?

Bor. Mary it is your brothers right hand.

John. Who, the most exquisite *Claudio*?

Bor. Euen he.

John. A proper squier, and who, and who, which way lookes he?

Bor. Mary on *Hero*, the daughter and Heire of *Leonato*.

John. A very forward March-chicke, how came you to this?

Bor. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smooching a musty roome, comes me the Prince and *Claudio*, hand in hand in sad conference: I whipt behind the Arras, and there heard it agreed vpon, that the Prince should wooe *Hero* for himselfe, and hauing obtain'd her, giue her to Count *Claudio*.

John. Come, come, let vs thither, this may proue food to my displeasure, that young start-up hath all the glorie of my ouerthrow: if I can crosse him any way, I blesse my selfe euery way, you are both sure, and will assist mee?

Con. To the death my Lord.

John. Let vs to the great supper, their cheere is the greater that I am subdued, would the Cooke were of my minde: shall we goe proue whats to be done?

Bor. Wee'll wait vpon your Lordship.

Exeunt.

Actus Secundus.

Enter Leonato, his brother, his wife, Hero his daughter, and Beatrice his niece, and a kinsman.

Leonato. Was not Count *John* here at supper?

Brother. I saw him not.

Beatrice. How tartly that Gentleman looks, I neuer can see him, but I am heart-burn'd an houre after.

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beatrice. Hee were an excellent man that were made iust in the mid-way betwene him and *Benedicke*, the one is too like an image and saies nothing, and the other too like my Ladies eldest sonne, euermore tatling.

Leon. Then halfe signior *Benedicke*'s tongue in Count *John*'s mouth, and halfe Count *John*'s melancholy in Signior *Benedicke*'s face.

Beat. With a good legge, and a good foot vnckle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would winne any woman in the world, if he could get her good will.

Leon. By my troth Neece, thou wilt neuer get thee a husband, if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

Brother. In faith shee's too curst.

Beat. Too curst is more then curst, I shall lessen Gods sending that way: for it is said, God sends a curst Cow short hornes, but to a Cow too curst he sends none.

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no hornes.

Beat. Iust, if he send me no husband, for the which blessing, I am at him vpon my knees euery morning and euening: Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face, I had rather lie in the woollen.

Leonato. You may light vpon a husband that hath no beard.

Beatrice. What should I doe with him? dresse him in my apparell, and make him my waiting gentlewoman? he that hath a beard, is more then a youth: and he that hath no beard, is lesse then a man: and hee that is more then a youth, is not for mee: and he that is lesse then a man, I am not for him: therefore I will euen take sixepence in earnest of the Berrord, and leade his Apes into hell.

Leon. Well then, goe you into hell.

Beat. No, but to the gate, and there will the Deuill meete mee like an old Cuckold with hornes on his head, and say, get you to heauen *Beatrice*, get you to heauen, heere's no place for you maids, so deliuer I vp my Apes, and away to *S. Peter*: for the heauens, hee shewes mee where the Batchellers sit, and there liue wee as merry as the day is long.

Brother. Well neece, I trust you will be rul'd by your father.

Beatrice. Yes faith, it is my cosens dutie to make curstie, and say, as it please you: but yet for all that cosin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make an other curstie, and say, father, as it please me.

Leonato. Well neece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beatrice. Not till God make men of some other mettal then earth, would it not grieue a woman to be ouer-mastred with a peece of valiant dust? to make account of her life to a clod of waiward marle? no vnckle, ile none: *Adams* sonnes are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sinne to match in my kinned.

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you, if the Prince doe solicit you in that kinde, you know your answer.

Beatrice. The fault will be in the musicke cosin, if you be not wooed in good time: if the Prince bee too important, tell him there is measure in euery thing, & so dance out the answer, for heere me *Hero*, wooing, wedding, & repenting, is as a Scotch jigge, a measure, and a cinque-pace: the first suite is hot and hasty like a Scotch jigge (and full as fantastical) the wedding manerly model, (as a measure) full of state & aunchentury, and then comes repentance, and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till hee sinks into his graue.

Leonato.

Leonato. Cousin you apprehend passing shrewdly. *Beatrice.* I haue a good eye vnckle, I can see a Church by daylight.

Leon. The reuellets are entring brother, make good roome.

Enter Prince, Pedro, Claudio, and Benedicke, and Balthasar, or dumbe John, Maskers with a drum.

Pedro. Lady, will you walke about with your friend?

Hero. So you walke softly, and looke sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walke, and especially when I walke away.

Pedro. With me in your company.

Hero. I may say so when I please.

Pedro. And when please you to say so?

Hero. When I like your fauour, for God defend the Lute should be like the case.

Pedro. My visor is *Philemons* roose, within the house is Loue.

Hero. Why then your visor should be thatch.

Pedro. Speake low if you speake Loue.

Bene. Well, I would you did like me.

Mar. So would not I for your owne sake, for I haue manie ill qualities.

Bene. Which is one?

Mar. I say my prayers alowd.

Bene. I loue you the better, the hearers may cry Amen.

Mar. God match me with a good dauncer.

Balt. Amen.

Mar. And God keepe him out of my sight when the daunce is done: answer Clarke.

Balt. No more words the Clarke is answered.

Vrsula. I know you well enough, you are Signior *Anthony*.

Anth. At a word, I am not.

Vrsula. I know you by the wagling of your head.

Anth. To tell you true, I counterfet him.

Vrsula. You could neuer doe him so ill well, vnlesse you were the very man: heere's his dry hand vp & down, you are he, you are he.

Anth. At a word I am not.

Vrsula. Come, come, doe you thinke I doe not know you by your excellent wit? can vertue hide it selfe? goe to, mummie, you are he, graces will appeare, and there's an end.

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

Bened. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainfull, and that I had my good wit out of the hundred merry tales: well, this was Signior *Benedicke* that said so.

Bene. What's she?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, belecue me.

Beat. Did he neuer make you laugh?

Bene. I pray you what is he?

Beat. Why he is the Princes iester, a very dull foole, onely his gittis, in deuising impossible slanders, none but Libertines delight in him, and the commendation is not in his witte, but in his villanie, for hee both please men and angers them, and then they laugh at him, and beat him: I am sure he is in the Fleet, I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the Gentleman, Ile tell him what you say.

Beat. Do, do, hee'l but breake on me, which peraduenture (nights) strikes him into melancholy: tridge wing saued, for the fool night. We must follow the Ladies.

Bene. In euery good thing. *Beat.* Nay, if they leade to the next turning.

Musicke for the Ring. *John.* Sure my brother is amorous, with drawne her father to breathe. Ladies follow her, and but one.

Borachio. And that is *Claudio* ring.

John. Are not you signior *Benedicke*?

Clau. You know me well.

John. Signior, you are verie leue, he is enamor'd on *Hero*, from her, she is no equall for him, part of an honest man in it.

Claudio. How know you he?

John. I heard him sweare his love.

Bor. So did I too, and hee flew to night.

John. Come, let vs to the banquet.

Clau. Thus answer I in name.

But heere these ill newes with him. 'Tis certaine so, the Prince woos.

Friendship is constant in all other

Sauie in the Office and affaires.

Therefore all hearts in loue vnto

Let euery eye negotiate for it

And trust no Agent: for beaues

Against whose charmes, faithfull

This is an accident of hourelie

Which I mistrusted not. Farewell.

Enter Benedicke.

Bene. Count *Claudio*.

Clau. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you goe with me?

Clau. Whither?

Bene. Euen to the next Willow.

finesse, Count. What fashion

land off? About your necke, li

under your arme, like a Lieute

weare it one way, for the Prince

Clau. I wish him ioy of her.

Bene. Why that's spoken like

they sel Bullockes: but did you

haue serued you thus?

Clau. I pray you leaue me.

Bene. Ho now you strike like

boy that stole your meate, and

Clau. If it will not be, Ile le

Bene. Alas poore hurt fowle

sedges: But that my Ladie *Beat*

not know me: the Princes fo

under that title, because I am

apt to do my selfe wrong: I am

base (though bitter) disposition

the world into her person, and

be reuenged as I may.

Enter the Prince.

Pedro. Now Signior, where

see him?